



Mixology

BoozeTube: Bartending Videos

If you're looking to hone your bartending skills, look no further than YouTube.

A handful of booze-based channels are drawing lots of attention and helping liquor connoisseurs stuck at home during the pandemic learn the tricks of the trade.

Here are a few YouTube channels to check out to start working on your mixology chops.

HOW TO DRINK

With 1.25 million subscribers, Greg Titian's "How to Drink" channel showcases his love of all things liquor. While most videos stick to the basics of mixing drinks, his top-viewed videos feature movie- and TV-based alcoholic creations. With 4.4 million views, his top video is "Butterbeer from Harry Potter." Other top videos include "The Big Lebowski's' White Russian" and The Simpsons-based "Broke My Toe Making a Flaming Moe."

Titian's videos are infused with humor. An episode about Long Island Iced Tea is titled, "This is a Glass of Trouble." An episode in which he gets more than a little tipsy trying every possible combination of seven brands of rye whiskey and six brands of vermouth is titled, "This Episode Tried to Kill Me." Typically videos include a running list of tasting notes, such as "Wowza!" "Coffee coffee buzz buzz," "No character,



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only pain" and "Gag me with a spoon."

STEVE THE BARTENDER

Australian Steve Roennfeldt is Steve the Bartender, a bartending pro with 20 years in the business, and business interests that include a mobile cocktail bar, a barware store, a cocktail app and a gin

distillery. His YouTube channel has more than half a million subscribers.

His recipes range from the basic "10 Easy Cocktails in 10 Minutes," to DIY ingredients such as grenadine, to complex cocktails such as a "Pineapple and Sage Margarita."

His top video, with 2.7 million views, is part one of the

three-part "5 Quick + Easy Vodka Cocktails." It includes three martinis — lemon drop, chocolate and espresso — as well as a Moscow mule and a Campari cocktail. He also offers videos with tips about how to use bartending gear.

EPICURIUS

The YouTube channel of

gourmet food content purveyor Epicurious includes a helping of liquor-focused fare.

The channel offers video playlists such as "Boozy Foods," (think cooking shrimp with tequila), "Classic Cocktails" and "Six-Pack Cooking" for beer-based recipes such as beer-steamed clams.



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The History of Absinthe

After a century-long absence from store shelves, absinthe is once again for sale in the United States.

This liquor has been controversial over the past 200 years since it was invented, but it's mostly a lot of hype about a drink that's perfectly harmless.

Also known as “The Green Fairy,” or “la fee verte,” it is made with wormwood, a medicinal herb used to cure fever and diarrhea and used by French legionnaires to fight off malaria, according to Flaviar. Its bitter flavor caused it to be called by a Greek word — *apsinthion* — that means “undrinkable.”

ORIGINS

In the 17th century, Swiss apothecaries distilled the herb into absinthe.

Aside from wormwood, absinthe is made from anise, fennel and other herbs and has a flavor of black licorice.

Marketed as a party drink, absinthe was a popular drink in Europe in the 1800s. Parisian bars offered “the Green Hour,” a happy hour meant especially for absinthe, according to Flaviar. Disease ravaged French vineyards, reducing wine output and helping fuel absinthe's soaring popularity.

Absinthe found its way into art and literature, having been depicted by Picasso, James Joyce, Van Gogh, Oscar Wilde and Earnest Hemingway. Wilde wrote, “A glass of absinthe is as poetical as anything in the world.”

Winemakers, who were concerned about losing market share to absinthe, seized on a 1905 murder by a man drunk on absinthe to paint the spirit as a dangerous hallucinogen. Along with help from the temperance movement and questionable science, wine-

makers succeeded in persuading several countries to outlaw absinthe, beginning with Sweden in 1910, the U.S. in 1912 and France in 1915.

A MODERN COMEBACK

Today we know that absinthe is not a hallucinogen. Beginning in the 1990s, Absinthe began to make a comeback when a Czech version was marketed.

In 2000, a French version was made, and by 2007, the United States had lifted the ban.

HOW TO DRINK IT

Drinking absinthe requires some knowledge and supplies. Because it is bitter and high-proof, you'll need sugar to help tame the Green Fairy. Doing so creates a white cloudy aesthetic called the *louche*. You'll also need an absinthe spoon.

Here's how to do it, according to The Spruce Eats.

1. Pour about 1 ounce of absinthe into an absinthe glass.
2. Lay an absinthe spoon across the top of the glass rim and place a sugar cube on the spoon.
3. Slowly pour ice-cold, distilled water onto the sugar, just enough to saturate it. Allow it to sit until the sugar cube begins to dissolve.
4. Pour more water over the sugar slowly until the desired dilution is found and the sugar is completely dissolved. The most common ratio is between three and five parts water to 1 part absinthe. As the water hits the liquor, the *louche* will swirl through the liquid, creating a visual spectacle and releasing the absinthe's herbal bouquet.
5. Allow the *louche* to rest, then stir in any remaining undissolved sugar.
6. Enjoy.

Gadgets and Gear

Home mixology was already booming in popularity before the pandemic saw bars closing, driving further demand for liquor and bar gear.

If you're looking to outfit your bar with functional gadgets or gift cool-looking gear, there are many options on the market from which to choose. Check your local liquor store or barware shop.

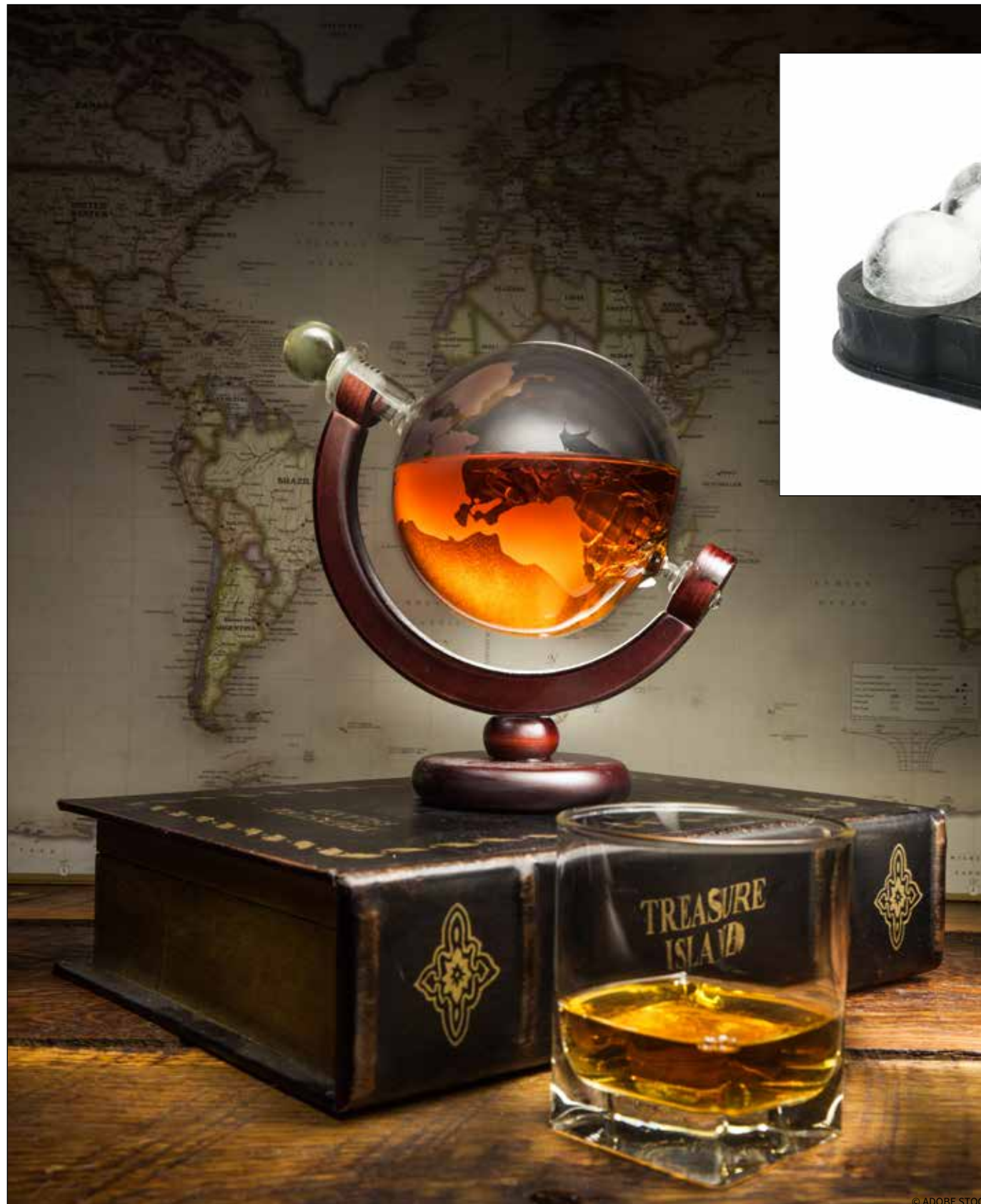
GADGETS

Smoke infuser. If a smoky bloody Mary sounds like heaven, check out a smoker made specifically for drinks. Some models include only a handheld smoker, while others include a glass cloche, sealed to keep in the smoke made by the smoker. Aside from smoking your drinks, you can also cold smoke cheese, appetizers, nuts and dips.

Smart gadgets. The Bartesian leads the field here. Think of it as a Keurig for liquor. Stock this smart device with basic spirit such as gin, vodka, tequila, whiskey and rum, as well as water. Then insert a "capsule" with the flavors for your preferred drink, press go on the touchscreen and watch the magic happen.

GEAR

Decanters. Decanters come in all shapes and sizes. If



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you're looking to gift a decanter, why not look for a model with a theme, such as a globe

with an antique ship that appears to float on the liquor's surface, or a Star Wars-

themed decanter in the shape of a Stormtrooper mask.

Diffusers. Spirits diffused

with flavors of fruits or spice are on trend. Do it yourself at home with an infuser. While you can use just about any glass vessel to infuse spirits, it's so much more visually appealing in a fancy infuser. These make great gifts.

Breathalyzer. It's important to stay safe while drinking. One way to drink responsibly is by checking your blood alcohol level before getting behind the wheel. After all, even if you've only had one drink, you're taking a risk when you drive. You can find a handheld Breathalyzer for less than \$100.

Cool cubes. Sphere and square ice "cubes" are all the rage. The clearer you can make them, the better. You can find two-part molds to make your preferred shape. Be sure to follow the directions, which usually include using distilled water.

A Moonshine Renaissance

If you think of moonshine as a rough Prohibition-era liquor cooked up in a bathtub and trafficked across the South by bootleggers in souped-up cars, you're not alone.

The high-proof, clear non-barrel-aged whiskey has had a bit of a renewal in popularity recently, however, and it's so much more than its humble roots suggest.

A HISTORY LESSON

From 1920 to 1933, the 18th amendment to the constitution banned the manufacture, sale and distribution of alcohol in the U.S. Moonshine, which had been around since the 1790s Whiskey Rebellion, rocketed in popularity the Appalachian Mountains to meet demand across the country.

Even after the 18th amendment was repealed, moonshine appealed to Depression-era drinkers enticed by its affordability.

Moonshine's place in popular culture was cemented, as it helped spawn NASCAR racing and Mountain Dew soda was dreamed up as a chaser for the liquor.

MODERN MOONSHINE

The first legal moonshine distillery was launched in



FRANK KEHREN/CREATIVE COMMONS

2005 by Piedmont Distillers in North Carolina. There are still many illegal operations, however. The Discovery Channel's "Moonshiners" documents the secretive distilling practices and history of moonshine, as well as the law enforcement officers who stay on the trail of bathtub gin.

First things first. Illegality is

essential to moonshine, meaning storebought moonshine may not even be the authentic article. When Tales of the Cocktail Foundation asked, "Is Moonshine Really Moonshine if It's Legal?" an anonymous moonshiner said, "No real moonshiner accepts store-bought as the real thing." If you don't know any

illegal moonshiners, however, buying it in the store might be the only way to get a taste of this legendary spirit.

Traditional moonshine is made from corn mash, giving a strong corn flavor. Modern moonshine, however, has toned-down corn notes and plenty of added sweet flavors, such as apple pie, cherry,

watermelon, butter pecan or blackberry.

Check with your local liquor stores for their selection of moonshine. Since it's a whiskey, Thrillist.com recommends mixing it with cola or adding vermouth and bitters to make a Manhattan, or try it with bottled iced tea for a smoother option.

Savory Margaritas

A classic Margarita has tequila, Triple Sec and lime juice. Fruits such as berry and citrus are natural pairings with tequila to make a fruity concoction.

You can punch up the flavor, however, with some more creative flavor profiles.

If you're willing to adventure outside sweet and fruity flavored margaritas, try these outside-the-box recipes.

JALAPENO CILANTRO MARGARITA

Source: Epicurious.com.

- 1 lime wedge
- 1 to 3 thin slices jalapeno (stemmed, seeded, sliced lengthwise)
- 2 cilantro sprigs
- 1 1/2 ounces blanco tequila
- 1 ounce fresh lime juice
- 1 ounce Cointreau
- 1/2 ounce agave syrup or simple syrup
- 6 to 10 ice cubes

Muddle jalapeno and one of the cilantro sprigs. Add the tequila, lime juice, Cointreau, agave and ice. Cover and shake.

GREEN TEA MARGARITA

Source: HomeWetBar.com.

- 1 1/2 ounce Patron Reposado tequila
- 1/2 ounce Zen Green Tea Liqueur
- 1/2 ounce sour mix
- 0.2 ounce Triple Sec



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0.1 ounce lime juice
Shake over ice, strain and serve straight up in a glass of your choosing. Garnish the rim of the glass with salt and add a lime wedge, if desired.

ROASTED TOMATO MARGARITA

Source: The Cookie Rookie
1 pound cherry tomatoes
Drizzle olive oil

1 clove garlic minced
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon chili powder optional
1/4 cup water
1 shot (1.5 ounces) good quality tequila
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
1 cup ice
Chili powder course sea salt, lime

slices for garnish

Heat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large bowl, toss together the tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, salt, and pepper, and chili powder.

Spread tomato mixture onto a baking sheet and roast in the oven for 15 minutes.

Add tomatoes to a high powered blender with 1/4 cup water. Blend

on high until totally smooth.

Add tomato puree to a cocktail shaker with tequila, lime juice, and ice. Shake.

Mix together the chili powder and course salt on a small plate. Use a lime wedge to wipe the rim of your glass, and then dip in the chili/salt combination.

Fill glass with more ice.

Pour margarita into the glass and garnish with lime wedge. Enjoy.



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Trends in Liquor

With so many people drinking at home because of the pandemic, COVID-19 has turned out to be the single biggest force shaping trends in liquor.

Here's a look at the trends defining the market in 2021.

'READY TO DRINK'

If you've seen a canned vodka soda or Moscow mule on the shelf of your local liquor store, you've witnessed the "ready to drink" trend in liquor. In 2020, hard seltzer took the spotlight. Other ready to drink cocktails are poised to do the same in 2021.

This is due to the booming at-home liquor trend, and bartenders who look to the ready to drink format to share their creations, according to Wine

Enthusiast. In addition, Forbes predicts that craft hard seltzers will be a trend in 2021, including "upscale ingredients, artisanal flavors and elevated packaging."

The RTD trend could also include restaurants offering large portions of their cocktails to go, Wine Enthusiast predicts, thanks to relaxed local regulations.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Consumers will be more interested in the way the companies that own their favorite brands do business, according

to market watchers. This includes social responsibility issues such as environmentally friendly production methods, and equality and inclusion.

Consumers are known to vote with their wallets when it comes to their values. This means taking a stand on issues such as racism, sexism and inequality, and boycotting brands that don't match their values.

This trend could lead to companies being more transparent about their values. Here are some examples of responsible brands you can support.

- Absolut Elyx vodka has a partnership with Water For People, which helps provide sustainable clean water to people around the globe.

- The profits of The Dead Rabbit, an Irish whiskey brand, go entirely to Aware Northern Ireland, an organiza-

tion that supports people battling mental illness.

- The Fair Quinoa vodka brand is made from organic, fair-trade quinoa produced by a co-op of farmers in the Bolivian Andes and distilled by a family-owned French still.

MEXICAN LIQUORS

Another trend on the horizon is Mexican spirits, such as agave-based tequila and Mezcal. According to online retailer Drizly, tequila has been growing in popularity for years, more than doubling from 3.09 percent of market share in 2016 to 6.52 percent of share in 2020. In late 2020, Forbes reported that the boom in popularity of tequila had led to agave shortages. Retailers report increased demand for premium bottles, such as single-barrel tequilas.

Stock your Bar: A Checklist

If you're starting a home bar, you'll need a minimum of materials to get started.

Here is a checklist to be sure your bar has everything you need to mix up basic drinks. As your repertoire of mixed drinks grows, you'll need to add more supplies and tools of the trade to your bar.

Shaker. Most bartenders a Boston shaker, which includes two cups that fit tightly together to contain the liquid. You don't have to spend a lot to get a good shaker. A basic model will do.

Glasses. The kinds of glasses you'll need depends on the types of drinks you want to make. Pint glasses for beer and shot glasses for shooting liquors are common. You'll need rocks glasses to make and serve drinks that are stirred, such as a Manhattan. Highballs are used for drinks with a small amount of liquor and a larger volume of a mixer, such as a vodka cranberry cocktail. The list goes on. Start with a few different types.

Accessories. You will need a strainer for shaken drinks, jiggers to measure out liquor, a bar spoon for mixing, ice tongs, a muddler, paring knife, corkscrew, bottle opener and citrus juicer.

Of course, you'll need to start with some basic liquors



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and mixers to craft your drinks. Here is a list of recommended buys for beginners, according to LightspeedHQ.com.

Liquors. Vodka, gin, tequila, whiskey, Scotch, Bourbon, rum.

Liqueurs. Amaretto, coffee liqueur, dry and sweet vermouth, Irish cream liqueur, orange liqueur.

Mixers. Lemon and lime juice, orange juice, cranberry juice, grapefruit juice, pineapple juice, tomato juice, bitters,

simple syrup, sour mix, grenadine, milk or half and half or cream, Tabasco sauce, Worcestershire sauce, club soda, tonic water, ginger ale, cola and diet cola, lemon-lime soda.

Garnishes. Garnishes make

your drinks more presentable. Here are a few you'll want to have on hand: lemons, limes, oranges, Maraschino cherries, olives, cocktail onions, mint, salt, sugar, cinnamon, grated nutmeg, celery, pickles, whipped cream.